

IN MEMORIAM

Jacob M. Landau (1924–2020)

It is with deep sadness that I write to inform you that Jacob M. Landau, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and a foremost scholar of the modern Middle East and Central Asia, passed on November 12, 2020. He died in Jerusalem, surrounded by loving family, at the age of 96.

Landau was born in 1924 in Kishinev, Romania (Today in the Republic of Moldova) to a middle-class Jewish family. Both his parents were university graduates and ardent Zionists. His father, Michael, was an attorney who also served three terms in the Romanian parliament in Bucharest, representing Jewish voters. Young Jacob attended the first five grades in schools in Kishinev and Bucharest. By the time he was eleven years old, he was fluent in five languages. Years later, he would explain that Romanian was the language used in school while Russian was spoken on the street, as the Kishinev area had been part of the Russian Empire and was ceded to Romania only at the end of the First World War. At home he spoke French and German with his parents who also taught him to read and write these languages. In addition, his parents hired a tutor to teach Jacob Hebrew, in preparation for their anticipated immigration to Palestine. These linguistic skills, and others that he would acquire in the course of his studies, would provide Jacob excellent research tools in his future academic career.

In 1935, when Jacob was eleven years old, the family immigrated to Palestine, settled in Tel Aviv, and Jacob enrolled in the Herzliyah Hebrew Gymnasium. During the seven years he studied at the gymnasium, he acquired native fluency in Hebrew and a sound knowledge of English as well as Arabic, a language he would later make his main research tool for many years.

Academic Studies and Scholarship. In 1942, upon graduating from the gymnasium, Jacob Landau enrolled in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem where he majored in history and in Arabic language and literature. He also found time to study several additional languages, acquiring reading

fluency in Turkish, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese and using them in his research. At the university, he became interested in the study of nationalism in the Middle East. He wrote his Master's thesis on nationalism in Egypt under the guidance of the well-known historian Michael Richard Koebner. In 1946, he received his Master's degree (*magna cum laude*), whereupon he continued with his doctoral studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, under the guidance of the renowned Bernard Lewis. He received his Ph.D. in 1949, having written his doctoral thesis on the topic *Parliaments and Parties in Egypt, 1866-1924*. In his dissertation he analyzed Egypt's sociopolitical structure and the European impact on Egyptian politics. In 1953, the dissertation was published in book form in Jerusalem (Israel) and a second edition appeared in New York in 1954. The book was translated into Arabic and published in 1975 in both Beirut and Cairo, a rare honor for an Israeli scholar, considering the hostile relations between Israel and all its Arab neighbors at the time. His interest in the study of modern Egypt would continue to guide him for many years to come.

A second area that attracted Landau's interest was the study of Arabic language and literature with particular emphasis on the theater. In the late 1940s and early 1950s he published several articles on the Palestinian theater. Landau spent the 1955-56 academic year as a post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, working with the well-known H.A.R. Gibb. He used his fellowship period to expand his studies on the Arab theater with particular emphasis on Egypt. In 1958 he published *Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema* (Philadelphia). This was the first scholarly publication on the subject in any language and it was translated and published in French (Paris, 1965) and Arabic (Cairo, 1972). The book on the theater was followed a year later by a volume entitled *A Word Count of Modern Arabic Prose* (New York, 1959), which examined statistically a selection of writings in modern Egyptian Arabic to facilitate word selection in the preparation of textbooks in literary Arabic for foreigners. In 1968 he published with H.A.R. Gibb *Arabische Literaturgeschichte* (Zurich), which was translated and published in Hebrew (Tel Aviv, 1970) and Turkish (Ankara, 1994 and 2002). His interest in Arabic studies was also expressed later in the publication of a comparative selection of Hebrew and Arabic proverbs: *Hebrew-Arabic Proverbs* (Jerusalem, 1998; Second edition, 2002; with David Sagiv).

As an Israeli citizen Landau could not hope to do field research in Egypt. Since he already knew Turkish, he decided to turn his interests to the study of late Ottoman and modern Turkish history, society, and politics based on research in the Turkish archives and libraries. His book *The Hejaz Railway*

and the Muslim Pilgrimage: A Case of Ottoman Political Propaganda (Detroit, 1971) is based on a unique Arabic manuscript which he had discovered in Istanbul and then published with an edited Arabic text and an English translation and notes. It is an account of the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca just before the construction of the railroad to Medina, along with a detailed description of the railroad's construction. Other major works published by Landau which have been widely quoted and which served as starting points for studies by other scholars include: *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey* (Leiden, 1974; also in Turkish: Ankara, 1978); *Pan-Turkism in Turkey: A Study of Irredentism* (London, 1981; second enlarged edition, 1995; also in Greek: Athens, 1985; Chinese: Urumchi, 1992; and Turkish: Istanbul, 1999); *Tekinalp, Turkish Patriot, 1883–1961* (Istanbul and Leiden, 1984; also in Turkish: Istanbul, 1996). The last book reveals the life story and writings (some still in manuscript) of a Jewish intellectual who was one of the foremost champions of pan-Turkism in the late Ottoman period, and then of Turkish nationalism in Turkey's republican era. Tekinalp had been totally unknown in Turkey before the publication of Landau's book and the discovery caused something of a sensation among Turkey's intellectual circles.

Landau also edited an important volume of collected articles entitled *Ataturk and the Modernization of Turkey* (Boulder, Colorado and Leiden, 1984). Written by world-renowned scholars, the book examines how Ataturk's policies have shaped contemporary Turkish society and politics. The articles in this volume were first presented at an international conference convened at the Truman Institute in Jerusalem in October 1981, to mark the centenary of Mustafa Kemal's birth.

The interaction between Islam, nationalism, and politics was another area to which Landau made some major contributions. Notable books in this area are *Politics and Islam: The National Salvation Party in Turkey* (Salt Lake City, 1976) and *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford, 1990; second edition, 1994; also in Turkish: Istanbul, 1993). The latter book comprises, among its original appendixes, the first known "Manifesto of the Afghan Students' Islamic Federation," widely known today as Taliban.

Linked to his studies of nationalism and culture in general, Landau developed a special interest in the relation between nationalism and language in the Middle East and Central Asia, or what he called "linguistic politics." He published numerous articles dealing with the use of language in supporting and strengthening national identity, especially in Israel, Turkey, and Central Asia. Among his many contributions in this area are *The Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States* (Ann Arbor, 2001; also in Russian: Moscow, 2004; with Professor B. Kellner-Heinkele) and *Language*

Politics in Contemporary Central Asia (London, 2012; also in Russian: Moscow, 2015; with B. Kellner-Heinkele). He also edited a volume of collected articles entitled *Language and Politics: Theory and Cases* (Berlin and New York, 1999).

He used his multiple linguistic skills to study national minorities in the Middle East, in particular Arabs in Israel and Jews in Muslim countries, mainly in Egypt and Turkey. Notable books in these areas are: *Jews in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (New York, 1969; also in Hebrew: Jerusalem, 1967). This volume is based on original unpublished Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, and European sources. It is the first truly scholarly book on the subject and it has been used as a starting point by almost everyone who has done research on the Jews of Egypt. He also edited a volume of collected articles on the subject entitled *The Jews in Ottoman Egypt* (in Hebrew: Jerusalem, 1988; also in Arabic: Cairo, 2000).

On Israel's Arab population Landau published many articles and several definitive works. *The Arabs in Israel: A Political Study* (London: Oxford University Press, under the Auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1969) was immediately recognized as a most authoritative study and was almost immediately reprinted in 1970 (also in Hebrew: Tel Aviv, 1971). This was followed by *The Arab Minority in Israel, 1967-1991: Political Aspects* (Oxford, 1993; also in Hebrew: Tel Aviv, 1993).

Altogether, Landau authored an astounding 24 books, edited 12 others, and wrote some 600 scholarly articles and book reviews, which appeared in, or were translated into eleven languages.

Teaching Career. In 1949, when Landau completed his Ph.D., with the exception of the Technion (The Israel Institute of Technology), Israel had only one university, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Academic teaching opportunities for newly-minted Ph.D.s were few and far between. Thus Landau's first teaching position was at the Hebrew University's Experimental Secondary School where he taught history and Arabic. He taught there from 1949 to 1955, with a break from 1951 to 1953 to serve in the newly-formed Israeli army. In 1955 he was invited by Professor Simon Rawidowicz, chair of the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies department at Brandeis University in the United States, to teach modern Middle East history and Arabic for one year. Returning to Jerusalem in 1956, Landau continued teaching at the Experimental Secondary School, but was also invited by the Hebrew University's education department to serve as a teaching fellow in the program on teaching Arabic as a foreign language. In 1958 he was appointed a full-time lecturer at the Hebrew University's political science department, specializing on the politics of the modern and contemporary Middle East. Rising through the academic ranks, he continued to teach at the Hebrew

University's political science department until his mandatory retirement in 1992 as Professor of Political Science on the Gersten Chair. An innovator in the research and teaching of modern Middle East politics, Landau was the first to teach the subject in Israel's universities. Among his main teaching subjects were comparative history and politics of the modern Middle East, national minorities, and the politics of language in the Middle East.

Landau also held a part-time professorship (1960–68) at Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan, where he founded and chaired the department of Arabic studies. In addition, he held numerous visiting professorships and research fellowships abroad. These included visiting appointments at the University of California (Los Angeles), Columbia University (New York), Brandeis University (Waltham, Mass.), Princeton University (Princeton, NJ), Ankara University (Ankara, Turkey), Candido Mendes University (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), St. Anthony's College (Oxford, England), Albert Ludwigs Universitaet (Freiburg, Germany), Ruprecht-Karls Universitaet (Heidelberg, Germany), the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Wassenaar, Holland), and more. He also participated in, and lectured at, many international conferences around the globe. His pace did not slow down even after his mandatory retirement at age 68 and he continued teaching, lecturing, and doing research around the globe into his nineties.

Service to the Profession. Landau made numerous contributions to the profession in Israel and abroad. In 1949 he was co-founder and first secretary of the Israel Oriental Society, the professional association of Israeli scholars who study the Middle East and Africa. A life-long member of the society, he also served as editor of its journal, *The New East* (1993–98), and as a member of its executive council (1994–2000). He also served as director of research at the Ben-Zvi Institute for the study of Jewish communities in the Islamic World (1971–73), as president of the Israeli Association of Political Science (1985–87), and as a member of the editorial boards of several other professional publications in Israel as well as in Turkey, Holland, Canada, Sweden, Britain, and France. In addition, he was a member of several international associations, including Middle East Studies Association of North America, Association Europeene des Arabisants et Islamisants, International Association of Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman Studies (CIEPO; member of the executive council, 1984–92), Turkish Historical Society (Elected Honorary Fellow, 1989), and more.

Awards and Honors. Landau received numerous awards and honors from various academic and professional organizations. These include the

Ben-Zvi Memorial Prize by the Ben-Zvi Institute (Jerusalem, 1969), Itzhak Gruenbaum Memorial Award by the World Jewish Congress (Jerusalem, 1974), and Bosphorus University Medal for distinguished research (Istanbul, 1981). He was also appointed Honorary Member of the Turkish Historical Society (Ankara, 1988), Israel's Oriental Society, and of the Israel Association of Political Science (Jerusalem, 1999). In 2005, he received the Israel Award (Israel's highest prize for original scholarship awarded by the state) for his research in Middle Eastern Studies. In 2016, the Arminius Vambery Association for Turcological Studies in Budapest awarded Landau their Annual Scholar's Prize for his research. In spite of his monumental achievements, Landau remained a modest man, approachable to all.

Landau was a citizen of the world. He knew everyone in his field and (almost) everyone knew him. His works on the Arab theater, Turkish radical politics, Pan-Turkism, Pan-Islam, the Jews in Egypt, the Arab minority in Israel, and the politics of language were path-breaking. A testimony to their significance is the fact that his books appeared in or were translated into eleven languages. Of these, six were translated into Turkish and three into Arabic. What was truly amazing was his command of so many languages, which he used in his research as well as in conversation. As witnessed in many international conferences, he moved smoothly from one language to another, demonstrating his linguistic acumen. I remember attending an international conference in Canberra, Australia, in December 1970, when in a panel on modern Egypt, a Russian speaker read his paper in English, but needed a translator to handle his Q&A segment. For some unknown reason, the intended translator withdrew and for a moment it appeared that the Q&A segment would have to be cancelled. At that very moment, from the room's corner, Landau piped up: "Translate from Russian to English? With pleasure." And the day was saved.

Landau leaves his wife, Zipora, their daughter Ronit, a distinguished painter, their son Iddo, professor of philosophy at Haifa University, and four grandchildren. He will be sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues around the world and by the numerous former students whom he had trained. Additional information on Jacob Landau's incredible career can be found in Wikipedia in the English, Hebrew, German, and Kyrgyz editions. ✎

DOI:[10.1017/rms.2021.14](https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2021.14)

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